

**Testimony of Hon. Kevin DeWine
Member, Ohio House of Representatives**

**Field Hearing of the Subcommittee on Federalism and the Census
House Committee on Government Reform
“The Air Force Institute of Technology: An Intergovernmental Model for Today’s Military
Education”**

**National Museum of the United States Air Force
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Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for holding this hearing and for providing me the opportunity to testify about the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) and the Dayton Area Graduate Studies Institute (DAGSI).

My name is Kevin DeWine. I represent the 70th District in the Ohio House of Representatives, which includes most of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Mr. Chairman, as the base’s principal representative in the Ohio House, I want to thank you for your record of support for Wright-Patterson, particularly last year during the BRAC process. I also want to recognize the entirety of Ohio’s Congressional delegation for its tireless work to protect and enhance Ohio’s military and defense installations and the Dayton Development Coalition for spearheading our efforts here locally.

In today’s global economy, states, as well as nations, talk about competing with knowledge, competing on technological advancement and innovation. The Dayton area and the state of Ohio are well suited to take advantage of this environment with research and development gems such as Wright Patterson Air Force Base, the NASA Glenn Center in Cleveland and our many premier educational research institutions. Here in the Dayton region, we are proud to have two unique entities (AFIT and DAGSI) that allow us to showcase and utilize these resources for the economic benefit of all involved.

Ohio's economy is changing. Gone are the days when we could rely on agriculture and manufacturing to lead our economy. In order to ensure that Ohio is ready to meet the challenges of the new economy, we need to better prepare our future work force, giving them the tools and skills necessary to compete for high-tech, high-paying jobs. In the legislature, my colleagues and I are actively working to provide today's students with an education that prepares them for future success. To that end, we are looking at ways to increase the number of students who pursue degrees in the STEM disciplines – science, technology, engineering and mathematics. These fields represent growing trends, and by increasing the number of graduates in these areas we can provide the types of employees companies are looking for today. Notably, this has been a part of DAGSI's mission.

Since its creation in 1994, DAGSI's mission has been to increase and improve the quantity and quality of graduate educational and research opportunities in the STEM disciplines and to promote economic development in Ohio. Working closely with AFIT, it has become a critical component of our emerging high tech economy by providing a needed focus on highly specialized fields of research. DAGSI allows member schools to combine resources, including faculty and facilities, to offer greater value to their students and the Air Force as well as our community. Since its inception, the State of Ohio has provided more than \$50 million for the DAGSI and AFIT partnership, demonstrating the deep and long-term support of AFIT and the Air Force by the State of Ohio.

The intellectual capital brought to Ohio and developed within AFIT has become an important resource as we continue the pursuit of a technology based economy. AFIT, located on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base just outside Dayton, is a fully-accredited graduate school that offers masters degrees in engineering, management, and logistics, and Ph.D. degrees in

engineering. AFIT's world-class facilities and faculty make it one of our nation's top universities. It is a key asset in our effort to keep Dayton and Ohio in the forefront of technology development with its 1,000 students and a faculty and staff of close to 700. Keep in mind that in this case a "student" is usually an Air Force officer and is equivalent to a high-value, high-wage job in terms of economic development. AFIT's presence in Ohio represents a significant economic impact.

Moreover, AFIT is a major part of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, which is the largest employer at a single site in Ohio. With about 22,000 employees, and hundreds of millions of dollars spent every year on construction, equipment, supplies and local contracts, the base has an estimated economic impact of \$2.8 billion.

As you well know, AFIT has been recommended for closure by two previous BRAC processes (1996 and 2005.) In both instances, the base closure commission rejected the proposals to close AFIT, in part, because we have been able to articulate the success story that we have created in Dayton for AFIT through DAGSI.

Despite our two victories in the last decade to keep AFIT open, we can expect additional new challenges in the coming years from people who do not understand the unique contributions AFIT makes to our national defense. We will again have to be prepared to defend AFIT.

For their part, the staff and faculty of AFIT can defend the institution by continuing to provide the highest quality education possible while directing teaching and research to the unique needs of the Defense Department. The members of our ever-vigilant Congressional delegation have rallied around AFIT and we can expect their strong support in the future. But it is also critical for the community, the State of Ohio, and the nearby educational institutions to

underscore the reasons why AFIT needs to stay open. AFIT is too important to our region to lose.

In the decade of its existence, DAGSI has successfully supported AFIT and the DAGSI partners. In doing so, it has achieved its mission of promoting economic development in Ohio.

We in the Dayton Region, home to the Wright brothers and so many other technology pioneers, are proud of our heritage. We know, however, that we cannot rest on the achievements of the past. We need to demonstrate that we are still home to creativity and cutting-edge technologies. The DAGSI and AFIT partnership has a decade-long track record of benefiting the Air Force and the state of Ohio. It is in the best interest of all of us that we continue to foster the success of this partnership now and for years to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. I would be happy to take any questions you may have at this time.